

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated October 28, 2008. Claims 1 to 5 and 7 are in the application, with Claim 1 being independent. Claim 1 has been amended. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 5 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for alleged indefiniteness. The amendments to Claim 1 are seen to attend to this rejection. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,369,316 (Plessing) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,993,582 (Yoshino) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,149,757 (Chikaki). Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Plessing in view of Yoshino and Chikaki and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,127,622 (Yamada). Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Plessing in view of Yoshino and Chikaki and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,426,633 (Taylor). Reconsideration and withdrawal are respectfully requested.

Independent Claim 1 as amended generally concerns a method of producing a solar cell module having a laminating step, in which a body to be laminated comprising of photovoltaic devices and a sealing member is mounted on a mounting board heated at a predetermined temperature and the body to be laminated is heat-bonded by pressing with pressing means. The method includes mounting the body to be laminated on a tabular member, carrying in the body to be laminated along with the tabular member onto the mounting board, and heat-bonding the body to be laminated by pressing using the pressing means. The method further includes carrying out the body to be laminated along with the

tabular member from the mounting board after parting the pressing means from the body to be laminated, and separating the body to be laminated from the tabular member. The pressing means is provided opposite to the mounting board heated at a predetermined temperature, and the pressing means applies pressure on the body to be laminated which is sandwiched between the pressing means and the mounting board. The pressing means is cooled by cooling means after carrying out the body. Another body to be laminated is carried in along with another tabular member onto the mounting board after cooling the pressing means.

Thus, among its many features, Claim 1 provides that (i) the pressing means is provided opposite to the mounting board heated at a predetermined temperature, and the pressing means applies pressure on the body to be laminated which is sandwiched between the pressing means and the mounting board, and that (ii) the pressing means is cooled by cooling means after carrying out the body. The applied references of Plessing, Yoshino, Chikaki, Yamada and Taylor are not seen to disclose or suggest at least these features.

As understood by Applicants, Plessing discloses an arrangement for laminating layers. The arrangement includes a heating stage 21, a vacuum laminator 17, an upper part 18, a lower part 19 and a hydraulic arrangement 20. See Plessing, Figure 2.

The Office Action equated Plessing's heating stage 21 with the claimed mounting board, and equated Plessing's elements 17 to 20 with the claimed pressing means. The Office Action also acknowledged that Plessing does not disclose that a pressing means is cooled by cooling means, but directed attention to column 4, lines 44 to 48 of Chikaki for this alleged disclosure.

The cited portion of Chikaki is seen to disclose that a heating stage 10 can

include a water cooled pipe in order to control the heating temperature of the heating stage 10.

However, even if Plessing and Chikaki are combined in the manner proposed in the Office Action (assuming for argument's sake that such combination would be permissible), the result would not disclose that a pressing means is cooled by cooling means, as claimed. As noted above, Chikaki is seen to disclose that a water cooled pipe controls the heating temperature of heating stage 10. Thus, if Chikaki and Plessing are combined, it would be the heating stage 21 of Plessing (equated in the Office Action with the claimed mounting board) that is cooled. The combination of Chikaki and Plessing is not seen to disclose or suggest that elements 17 to 20 of Plessing (equated in the Office Action with the claimed pressing means) are cooled. Further, heating stage 21 of Plessing is not seen to correspond with the claimed pressing means, since the claimed pressing means is provided opposite to the mounting board and applies pressure on the body to be laminated, which is sandwiched between the pressing means and the mounting board.

The Office Action at page 7 further alleged that Chikaki's cooling can be performed in the middle of a series of repeated laminations. Applicants respectfully disagree. As noted above, Chikaki is merely seen to disclose that a water cooled pipe controls the heating temperature of heating stage 10. Such cooling is not necessarily seen to correspond with performing cooling in the middle of a series of repeated laminations.

Accordingly, Plessing and Chikaki are not seen to disclose or suggest that (i) the pressing means is provided opposite to the mounting board heated at a predetermined temperature, and the pressing means applies pressure on the body to be laminated which is sandwiched between the pressing means and the mounting board, and

that (ii) the pressing means is cooled by cooling means after carrying out the body.

In addition, Yoshino, Yamada and Taylor have been reviewed and are not seen to compensate for the deficiencies of Plessing and Chikaki. In particular, Yoshino, Yamada and Taylor are not seen to disclose or suggest at least foregoing features (i) and (ii).

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims and are believed to be allowable over the applied reference for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

No fees are believed due; however, should it be determined that additional fees are required, the Director is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account 06-1205.

Regarding a formal matter, it is respectfully requested to receive an initialed copy of the Information Disclosure Statement dated December 19, 2008.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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